

## Jungle Walks, Uganda

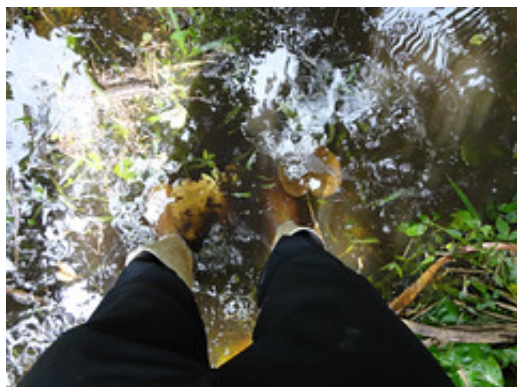
While working in Uganda I had the chance to make a couple of escapes. One of those was into Kibale National Park in western Uganda. It is most famous for it's many primates, especially chimpanzees. But I liked the feeling of being in such a dense, forested place.



There are, however, a few things you might want to do before frogging off into the jungle. Most importantly, have a compass, map and lots of rations for when you get lost, or go along with someone who has been through that jungle before. For my first walk in Kibale I chose the easy route, and went with a guy who knew the paths.



Equally important is having proper shoes, boots, leather tied to your feet, or what ever the locals are wearing to get them through. In this case rubber boots were the rage. But, perhaps sadly, they only had white in my size.



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Sure the white boots look geeky, but they sure help when you're walking through a forest that looks like this. And besides, I never did find out what sorts of creatures are/could be/should be/or might be lurking and looming in those jungle waters.



Any decent jungle walk deserves an equally strange place to reside. And this is the path to my cottage in the jungle.

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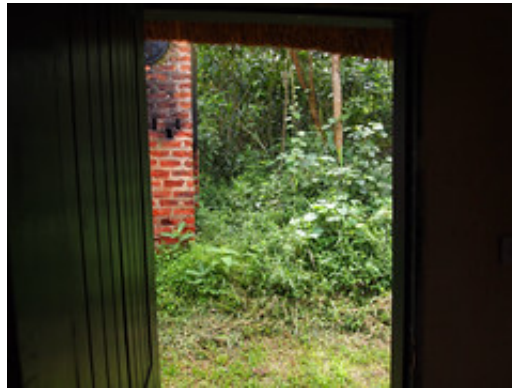
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The cottage was solidly built, which is comforting when you're sleeping in the jungle. The room contained a bed and, well, that was it.



This is the view from the door.



I am beginning to think that one of the most unpredictable places to be is in the jungle. My first night in Kibale started that thought process. First it started to rain, which is predictable. But the stalwart and famous Bugandan thatching easily held out the rain, as this photo shows.



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But then the intense downpour turned into hail. Seeing white torpedoes crashing into the jungle is not something I would or could predict. But there it was.



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On the next day I had planned to join a group of folks to search for chimpanzees in Kibale. This is the view of Kibale I first had that morning.



I took a motorcycle taxi into Kibale and joined a group of friends with an armed guide.



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This is an artist's version of what we were looking for.



One of the things the guide taught us was that if you are not wearing cool rubber boots, then you should pull your socks up a tad to stop the ants from making an attack. And I can confirm that advice, since on a different day in another park I stopped to take a photo, but did not look down to see the steady, strong trail of large black ants at my feet. For those of you who think that I cannot dance, I can only say that on that day I did, as the ants drew blood from me and laughter from those who watched.



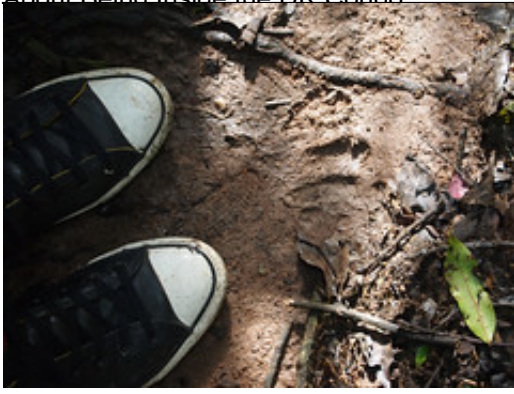
The guide also showed us to look out for chimpanzee knuckle prints on the ground. The sneakers show that we as a species have evolved. No more of that knuckle walking for us, just endless shoe stores.



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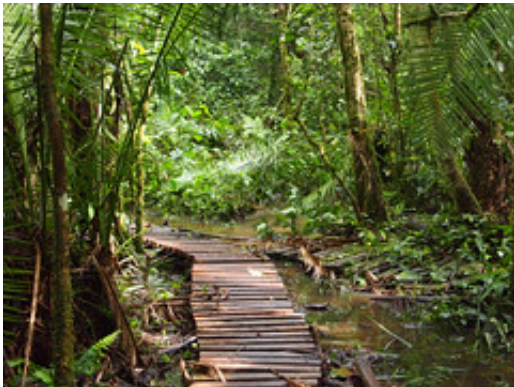
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Yet there are also other prints on the jungle floor that may not prove so friendly.



And so we continued our walk looking for chimpanzees.



And our search for chimpanzees in the jungle was ultimately successful, as these happy human faces show.

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